



CAFCA
Connecticut Association
for Community Action

**Connecticut's Community Action Agencies:
Proposal to Establish a Flexible Client Support Fund**

Proposal: Connecticut's Community Action Agency Network proposes that the State establish a flexible client support fund, with \$5 million of state and/or federal funds. The Community Action Agencies would administer this fund and provide assistance to vulnerable and at-risk populations statewide, particularly those who do not qualify for existing programs and services.

Background

For nearly sixty years, Community Action Agencies (CAAs) have worked to address and reduce the causes and conditions of poverty by providing holistic case management services and application assistance for social service programs to the state's poorest residents. CAAs connect low- and moderate-income people in all 169 cities and towns with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities. These services and resources include, but are not limited to, food, shelter, heating assistance, employment and training, asset development, and early childhood care and education.

The Need

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Community Action Agencies have continued to ensure their customers and those facing hardship receive vital services while taking the necessary staff and customer safety precautions. And, over the past several months, six of the nine state CAAs have served as Community Resource Coordinators, helping those in quarantine by connecting them with services and items that they need, like grocery shopping, formula/diapers, and more.

Although federal stimulus checks, unemployment benefit supplements and extensions, and eviction moratoriums have helped ease the financial strain many people are under, it is simply not enough – and likely get worse once these programs end. Additionally, we have seen that many of the working poor, adults with disabilities, and older adults are over-income for some of the most critical programs, such as SNAP and rental assistance. There is a significant, unmet, and underfunded need for additional support.

Proposal

To continue to help those adversely impacted by the pandemic this year and beyond, Connecticut's Community Action Agency Network proposes that the State provide \$5 million to establish a flexible client support fund to assist individuals and families in meeting basic needs. These funds could either be from federal Coronavirus Relief Funds or from state funds.

The goal of this work is to provide targeted, direct assistance to the working poor and others who come to Community Action Agencies for help, but do not qualify for state and/or federal benefits. This assistance includes food, medicine, rent/mortgage payments, or unemployment relief if someone had their hours reduced at work but cannot collect benefits. These needs are especially important if a person gets exposed to or contracts COVID-19.

Projected Outcomes

By partnering with Connecticut's Community Action Agency Network on this proposal, the State can expect to achieve the following anticipated outcomes and benefits:

- Increased number of individuals and households who can afford basic, household necessities.
- Decreased number of COVID-19 cases by helping people quarantine and isolate safely.
- Improved opportunity for individuals across income levels and geographies within Connecticut.
- A thriving economy that is more equitably distributed across age, race, and ethnicity.

*For more information, please contact Deb Polun at CAFCA:
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Connecticut Association for Community Action, Inc. (CAFCA) is the state association for Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal designated anti-poverty agencies serving low- and moderate-income people in all 169 cities and towns across the state.